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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQI GOVERNMENT, CONSTITUTION;
BAGHDAD

SUMMARY: Discussions on the Constitution was the major editorial theme of the daily newspapers on August 24, 2005.
END SUMMARY.

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SELECTED COMMENTARIES

[1A.](#) "The Second Step"
(Al-Bayyan Newspaper (affiliated with the Islamic Dawa Party led by Ibrahim Al-Ja'afari) in Arabic P 3 Editorial by Salim Rasool)

"At last, the newborn constitution has been submitted to the national assembly to give assembly members a chance to have a look at it. The next step is to find out what the Iraqi people think of the new constitution . . . This constitution was not easy to draft. Indeed, it made the Iraqi politicians work very hard and discuss difficult issues in order to draft a constitution that guarantees the rights of all Iraqis . . . The Iraqi politicians were able to submit the constitution draft before the second deadline. Nobody thought that the constitution would be submitted on time due to the continuous disagreements among the politicians. However, the Iraqi government proved that they are responsible and that they can reach an agreement despite the fact that their members come from different, religions, ethnicities and nationalities . . . The Iraqi leaders are moving forward wisely to continue the political process. I am optimistic about the next step, which is the National Assembly's endorsement of the constitution draft. After that, the Iraqi people will have their final word during referendum."

[1B.](#) "Federalism is the Decision of Our Free Will"
(Al-Ta'akhi Newspaper in Arabic (affiliated with the KDP led by Masood Al-Barzani) p. 1 Editorial By Dr. Badr Khan Al-Sindi)

"Those who oppose federalism in Iraq are either ignorant about the true meaning of federalism or they have a nationalistic, or religious desire control others. So, it is not very surprising that there have been objections to the idea of establishing federalist territories . . . In fact federalism is somewhat of a strange concept for the majority of Iraqis. This is due to the media coverage of the concept. The Iraqi media has been responsible for educating people about federalism. It does not seem that they have done a good job. Today, the majority of Iraqis, even those who support federalism, do not know that half of world's countries live under federal regimes. The Iraqi people do not know that we are not the first country who called for the establishment of federalism . . . In addition, many of those who oppose federalism do not want to admit that federalism means unity and it does not mean separation. Iraq has suffered for more than 80 years since the establishment of the first Iraqi state. It was formed according to a British plan. However, that plan proved to be unsuccessful. Iraq has experienced disasters, starvation, wars and tyranny in the south. We all know that the Kurds and the Arabs are brothers in this country. But, we must not forget that Iraq is made up of two main nations and the Kurds have the right to decide their own future . . . Without a doubt, those who oppose federalism are the same people who condemn dictatorship. Actually, some of them suffered from that dictatorship. We must accept that here in Iraq centralized governments are ripe for dictatorships. Federalism is the only way that can prevent the creation of

another dictatorship in Iraq. Removal of a dictator does not mean that the Kurdish people are ready to receive a new dictator in the name of nationalism or religion . . . It is very important to include federalism in the constitution because the Kurds and the Arabs who support this option want to establish it in new Iraq. Federalism is the best way to defend the new Iraq and we think that federalism reflects our free will."

C. "Pending Issues"

(Al-Adala Newspaper affiliated with SCIRI in Arabic P 3 Editorial by Ali Khalif)

"Iraq's enemies have been shocked by the timely submission of the constitution draft to the National Assembly. However, there are still some pending issues that made the happiness of Iraqi people incomplete. In fact, these issues need to be explained in order for the Iraqi people to understand them. The issue of federalism in the territories cannot be described as separation because all Iraqi political groups call for Iraq's unity. In addition, the United Iraqi Alliance has demanded to give every province the right to establish one or more territories. Furthermore, any territory can be merged with other territories. Does this sound like separation? This system will unite Iraq according to the will of the territories. If those who oppose federalism want to unite Iraq, why don't they establish their own federal territories and demand to be merged with the south or the north in an attempt to unite the country. . ? Why they want to omit from the Constitution the article that speaks about the Ba'ath party? We want to mention the Ba'ath party in order to remind people with its crimes . . . Concerning the distribution of natural resources; if we want to be selfish we would make United Iraqi Alliance the big loser. But, we adhered wanted to fairly distribute the revenue among all Iraqis. However, the Iraqi people are waiting for the referendum in order to give their final opinion on the merits of the constitution."

D. "The Solution is to Dissolve the National Assembly"

(Al-Zaman Newspaper (independent, Anti-Coalition) in Arabic last page Editorial By Fateh Abdul Salam)

"It would be no big sacrifice to dissolve the National Assembly and admit the failure of the drafting committee. This would ensure safety for the Iraqi people while they are witnessing the failure of all of their hopes . . . The best choice is to dissolve the TNA, because they won't be able to resolve the issues that plague the draft Constitution . . . Therefore, The TNA is the best easy sacrifice, because it is already a temporary entity . . . full of problems. The TNA was established under exceptional circumstances and the Iraqis will not feel sorry for dissolving it. This political body has not benefited the Iraqis at all. However, they have learned a good lesson for the upcoming elections. They have learned to keep their eyes wide open at the ballot boxes in the future . . . So, feel the comfort of dissolving the TNA and stop trying to build this heavy Constitution on such a weak base, because it will collapse in the end."

E. "The Uncovered Lie"

(Al-Basaer Weekly Newspaper (affiliated with the Association of Muslim Scholars, Anti-Coalition) in Arabic P. 1 Un-attributed Editorial)

"It is a bad situation for any nation when its leader becomes a liar and does not fulfill his promises. The Arab and Islamic nations are included in this as well. Nations that have found themselves in this situation have a bad destiny in the modern era. Iraq is one of these nations and its people have suffered for three long decades. We have moved from crisis to crisis until now we have reached occupied country status . . . We were looking forward to the time that we could be free of bad leaders. We were looking forward to forgetting about this phenomenon of a liar leader. Unfortunately, the phenomenon has gotten bigger than it was before because now we have more than one leader. Sometimes the leaders get along and sometimes they are looking out for their own interests. No matter what each of those leaders acts as though he is the main leader of our people. He assures us that he is taking care of the nation's interests better than anyone else . . . Those leaders talk about the constitution in the name of Iraq and they act like unity is the most important thing in the world to them. However, every time those leaders get together they behave in the best interests of their own sect or party and not in the best interest of Iraq . . . Some of them claim that Iraqis are drafting the constitution without any external pressure. Not even American pressure. However, we did see the US Ambassador attending sessions of the TNA. The government continues to put out statements that are full of lies. They promise, but they do nothing."

F. "Constitution Draft is the Middle Compromise"

(Al-Destour Newspaper (Independent) in Arabic P. 1 Editorial

by Bassem Al-Sheikh)

"The accomplishment of submitting the permanent constitution to the Iraqi National Assembly was underscored by the challenges of the postponement . . . Every one admired the flexibility of the political forces during the negotiations over the permanent constitution. The political leaders were able to complete the draft despite the short amount of time they had to achieve this victory and the stress involved . . . Iraq is anxiously awaiting the results of National Assembly's vote process. They are watching to see how they resolve several pending issues between the cross-sections of different political forces . . . The Sunni representatives still claim that they are being ignored and marginalized by the powerful parties in the Constitution Draft Committee. I think this is to be expected because the previous electoral process allowed those political parties to dominate the political process. However, the committee members were very eager to consider the minority opinions and allow those opinions into the constitution draft. They also took the time to consider all disagreement points and reach a compromise among all the political involved. They did this because this path benefited all Iraqis. The submitted constitution draft is a document that was achieved through compromise. The Iraqi politicians did this to secure safety for all Iraqis.